



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

**Department of
Health and Social Services**

DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
Family Nutrition Program

P.O. Box 110612
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0612
Main: 907.465.3100
Fax: 907.465.3416

September 3, 2012

Dear WIC Vendor:

Thank you for participating in the Alaska WIC Program as an authorized Vendor, providing nutritious supplemental foods to Women, Infants and Children in your community.

As you may remember, WIC Vendors are authorized for a three-year period, and must apply for re-authorization and sign a new Vendor Agreement at the beginning of the new authorization period. All WIC Vendor Agreements will expire on September 30, 2012, and a new Vendor Agreement must be in place by October 1, 2012, in order for Vendors to continue to accept WIC checks and fruit and vegetable vouchers (FVVs). Once signed, the new authorization period will be effective until September 30, 2015.

The WIC Vendor Unit will mail Vendors an application packet, consisting of a brief application and a new Vendor Agreement no later than September 11. The completed, signed application and Vendor Agreement must be returned to the Vendor Unit no later than September 28, 2012, in order to continue your authorization.

If you do not wish to continue as a WIC Vendor, your current Vendor Agreement requires that you provide the Vendor Unit with a written notification of your withdrawal from the program at least 10 days prior to the final date you intend to provide WIC foods, and then you must return your vendor stamp at the end of the ten-day period.

Important WIC Program News for Vendors:

- 1) WIC participants are provided a food prescription for specific foods and specific amounts of those foods to address medical need. No foods other than those prescribed may be substituted for the prescribed foods, even at the request of the participant. We cannot emphasize this enough. The WIC Program exists to provide very specific nutrition for a medical reason, rather than just more food.
- 2) Starting on October 1, the Vendor Unit will provide rural vendors with an approximate number of local WIC participants in your community to assist you in ordering and maintaining your stocks of WIC foods. The WIC participant estimate will be provided to Vendors on a quarterly basis. Please ask us for assistance if you need help estimating WIC foods in your store.
- 3) Minimum stock requirements – we have proposed new minimum stock requirements that are currently under review by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). **While we have lowered many minimum stock requirements, you must maintain enough stock for the number of participants with access to your store at all times. (The minimum amounts of foods must be present every day.)** A draft of the proposed minimum stock requirements is enclosed; it is subject to change after USDA review. Please contact the Vendor Unit with any comments or concerns. (Also see #6 below.)

- 4) Vendors and WIC participants have asked for better educational materials on authorized WIC food items. Starting in October, WIC participants will be issued a new, multi-page Food List with larger, clearer images of eligible foods along with improved descriptions of what is eligible.
- 5) The new Food List will also serve as the participant's Identification (ID) Folder. Cashiers will no longer be required to ask for a photo ID. They will be required to compare the signature on the ID Folder with the signature of the participant or proxy on the check.
- 6) During the spring of 2012, the WIC Vendor Unit conducted a comprehensive review of our Peer Groups, which resulted in an increase in the number of Peer Groups from 8 to 13. It also resulted in a realignment of stores, which we feel are grouped more fairly for a cost comparison of WIC foods. The new Peer Group list is enclosed. The proposed minimum stock requirements are based on store size as reflected in the peer groupings, rather than by the number of cash registers present in the store. Please contact the Vendor Unit with any questions or comments on the Peer Groups.

We truly value your participation in WIC, and it is important that the program work to your benefit, as well as the benefit of all recipients. We ask that you call in to one of the teleconferences listed below. If you can't make it to the teleconference scheduled for your size of store, you are welcome to call in at the other time. In addition, please feel free to call us with any questions or to ask us for training or assistance. We are committed to being responsive to your needs and concerns even if progress seems a bit slow at times.

Vendor Teleconferences:

September 25, 2012 9:00 – 10:00 small and rural stores

September 26, 2012 9:00 – 10:00 large, supercenter, and urban stores

Call-in number: 1 800-281-5354 Pass Code: 259225

We look forward to working with you for the next three years.

Sincerely,



Sandy Harbanuk
Vendor Coordinator



Alice Albrecht
Assistant Vendor Coordinator

Attachments: Peer Group List
Draft Minimum Stock